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Chairman:	Mr. Suazo	(Honduras)
later:	Mr. Benmellouk (Vice-Chairman)	(Morocco)
later:	Mr. Suazo	(Honduras)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 89: Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (*continued*) (A/57/137 and 211)

1. **Mr. Jalang'o** (Kenya) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In his report on the item (A/57/211) the Secretary-General had noted that the progress towards the achievement of the goals of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals had been uneven.

2. Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest proportion of people living in extreme poverty — and that proportion continued to increase. The problem was compounded by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and other infectious diseases, whose incidence continued to increase throughout the world. Moreover, the rural exodus had resulted in the rapid growth of slums, with a consequent increase in the numbers of slum-dwellers in the developing countries.

3. The Millennium Declaration had set noble goals for the eradication of poverty and for improved living standards. However, it was unlikely that those goals would be attained if the present trend continued. Sub-Saharan Africa must achieve sustained economic growth in order to produce substantial results in that area; much would depend on the progress of other factors, including life-expectancy, school enrolment and child mortality. Unless those indicators improved and unless the HIV/AIDS pandemic was contained, the gap between the sub-Saharan region and the rest of the world would continue to widen. Fortunately, the African continent was endowed with abundant natural resources. That was why the trend could be reversed if the African Governments reaffirmed their political will and their commitment to good governance and to the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS.

4. The fight against poverty would depend on the mobilization of additional resources to enable Kenya to put in place the necessary infrastructure for stimulating economic growth in a globalized world. It was often argued that domestic resources should constitute the primary source of development. But his delegation was convinced that those resources could be used only if national economies developed and incomes increased. Private capital flows had of course increased over the past decade, but only a few countries had benefited. The nature of such flows and their motivation made them an unreliable source of development financing. It was therefore necessary to improve the quality and the quantity of official development assistance (ODA) and explore new ways of financing development.

5. The debt burden of the developing countries constrained their ability to reduce poverty and to attain other development goals. Debt servicing had adversely affected budgetary allocations to such services as health and education. While appreciating the efforts of its development partners to find a durable solution to the debt crisis, such as the HIPC Initiative, Kenya believed that much remained to be done if the developing countries were to be freed from the debt burden. The eligibility criteria and the provision of resources must be overhauled, so that all deserving countries would be able to benefit.

6. Most of the developing countries depended on agriculture and exports of agricultural products. Agriculture accounted for a significant proportion of Kenya's income and employment — hence the sector's important role in poverty eradication. Kenya was introducing the necessary reforms at the national level, but its trading partners must make the required efforts to eliminate all trade distortions and other barriers in order to improve market access for agricultural commodities from the developing countries. In that connection, the cooperation between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries aimed at according preferential treatment to developing countries was laudable.

7. The implementation of the commitments made in the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and the special sessions of the General Assembly should be the foremost priorities. The world solidarity fund for poverty eradication proposed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/57/137) was an interesting initiative and should be acted upon quickly with a view to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

8. The fight against poverty would not succeed unless development resources were provided on a predictable and continuous basis. National ownership and partnerships were essential components of poverty eradication.

9. **Ms. Leonardo** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that the report

of the Secretary-General (A/57/211) was an excellent starting point for the debate on poverty eradication. In that connection, disaster preparedness was a driving concern for the Federation, which believed that, without proper attention to vulnerable populations, their poverty could not only be catastrophic for them as individuals but also slow the economic and social development of their countries. Coherent and sustainable disaster preparedness programmes must therefore be established. To that end, the Federation was committed to, inter alia, removing obstacles confronting the most vulnerable populations; ensuring that migrants had access to basic infrastructure, particularly in the area of health; and bringing relief to victims of prolonged disasters, who were often left to fend for themselves, and building an economic and social future for them. Southern Africa was one of many examples of the close relationship between poverty and HIV/AIDS-related problems in the areas of prevention, destigmatization, care and support.

10. Since Governments alone could rarely provide an effective response to natural disaster, the role of the Federation's national societies was to help ensure that there was no gap between governments, local populations and the implementation of effective response programmes. She noted with concern that poverty also existed in developed countries and that there was a growing number of marginalized persons in those countries. Moreover, no poverty eradication programme could be expected to work unless it addressed the needs of younger generations. It was important to build the capacity of youth to join in the fight against poverty. Volunteers were at the heart of the Federation's activities and sacrificed much of their time to help populations living in poverty. The Federation hoped that the debates in various organizations would provide a solid underpinning for specific work to be undertaken within the framework of the twenty-eighth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, scheduled for the following year in Geneva, which should be a key event in the struggle against poverty.

11. **Ms. Viotti** (Brazil) said that her delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The recent United Nations development conferences had highlighted the challenges facing the world, including the struggle against poverty, whose multidimensional nature had been stressed. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, heads of State and Government had resolved that poverty eradication should be at the core of international efforts. In the Monterrey Consensus, they had reaffirmed the common goal of eradicating poverty, achieving sustained economic growth, promoting sustainable development and advancing towards an inclusive and equitable global economic system. They had also expressed concern at shortfalls in the resources needed to achieve the agreed goals. In the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, participants had recognized that the eradication of poverty was the greatest challenge facing the world today and agreed on a series of actions to be taken at all levels to address the problem.

12. Poverty eradication was a priority, and general agreement had been reached on how to proceed in order to achieve it. however, in his report (A/57/211), the Secretary-General noted that progress in reducing poverty had been slow and uneven; certain countries were lagging, largely because of inefficient public spending, debt burdens, inadequate access to developed countries' markets and insufficient official development assistance (ODA).

13. Developing countries could achieve their full growth potential only if they had access to the markets of developed countries for their exports, and financing, investment and technology from abroad.

14. Brazil was committed participating in that collective effort. Poverty reduction initiatives undertaken in recent years had already borne fruit; however, much remained to be done, as one third of the population was still living in poverty. The government and society were determined to cooperate in order to reduce inequalities in the country through social programmes. In his report on the question, the Secretary-General noted the decentralization efforts taking place in Brazil as a means of utilizing resources more effectively. The report mentioned, in particular, the reformulation of the North-east Brazil Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme from a centrally administered, integrated rural development programme into a community-driven programme that targeted the poorest communities and involved them in decentralized decision-making, with a reduced role for public agencies. As a result, approximately 93 per cent of programme resources reached target communities, compared to 20 per cent under the earliest integrated rural development programmes. It was the intention of

the newly elected Government to continue promoting that policy.

15. The Brazilian Government and the United Nations had recently signed an agreement creating an international centre for poverty reduction in Rio de Janeiro, a cooperation mechanism which, building on the experiences of the Brazilian Institute for Applied Economic Research and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in that area, would contribute, through its studies, to poverty alleviation efforts in the various regions of the world and would therefore be an important tool for South-South cooperation.

16. In concluding his report, the Secretary-General stressed that the best efforts were likely to be insufficient without a supportive international economic environment, a conviction which had been expressed previously in the declarations adopted at recent major United Nations conferences.

17. A genuine effort to translate those commitments into concrete action was therefore essential. The establishment of a fair world trading system played a key role in that regard. Trade was a fundamental tool for development and poverty eradication. Only through improved access to world markets for the agricultural products and manufactured goods of developing countries and the elimination of export subsidies and trade barriers would developing countries be able to benefit fully from their comparative advantages. Building a sound international financial system, with the full participation of developing countries, must be a common endeavour in the coming years. Addressing the questions of the debt burden and the shortfall in official development assistance was also key to poverty eradication.

18. Brazil also welcomed the decision, taken in Johannesburg, to establish a World Solidarity Fund to eradicate poverty — a clear signal that governments were determined to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development in developing countries. The international community should fulfil the commitments undertaken in the previous decade. Despite their limited resources, developing countries would participate in that endeavour.

19. **Ms. Shongwe** (South Africa) said that her delegation identified itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It stressed that many countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, were not likely to achieve the goal of halving poverty by 2015, a point reflected in the Secretary-General's report on the question. The reasons for the lack of progress had been examined at the recent United Nations summits and conferences and at other international meetings, during which the international community had committed itself to make available the necessary means for attainment of the goals stated at the meetings. It was therefore imperative to spare no efforts, at both national and international levels, in taking up the moral challenge of combating the worst forms of poverty and underdevelopment.

20. The Monterrey Consensus had emphasized the importance of partnerships for development, spelling out the responsibilities of both developing and developed countries. The efforts of the developing countries must be supported by their development partners so as to maximize the benefits of development. With regard to ODA, the developed countries must ensure that flows of capital to support the development strategies of the recipient countries must be predictable and not tied. Furthermore, greater use needed to be made of domestic technical expertise. Where trade was concerned, there must be increased access for the products of the developing countries, and all tariff and non-tariff barriers must be removed. It was also essential to accelerate the implementation of the HIPC Initiative and help more African countries to reach the Completion Point.

21. The participants in the World Summit on Sustainable Development had undertaken further commitments aimed at the eradication of poverty, including the crucial decision to create a world solidarity fund for the eradication of poverty; it was to be hoped that the modalities of the fund's establishment would quickly be decided. The new decisions taken with respect to sanitation, energy, water and shelter complemented the Millennium Development Goals; the challenge was to ensure an integrated approach in their implementation and the coordination of the follow-up activities.

22. In September 2002 the participants in the high-level meeting of the General Assembly had considered how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an African Union programme for sustainable development. The commitment of the African countries themselves and the firm support which NEPAD had received from the international

community had opened the way for a meaningful partnership which should help the African countries to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment.

23. On the domestic front, poverty eradication remained an overarching priority of the South African Government, which allocated a large part of its budget to education, health and social services. The authorities had targeted their poverty reduction strategy on children, older people, the disabled, persons infected by HIV/AIDS, and women, especially in rural areas. The Government had set up a fund to provide emergency food aid to offset the recent food price inflation which had threatened the livelihoods of vulnerable households.

24. The Government had identified many priorities in its efforts to tackle social development challenges, especially with a view to integrated sustainable development, and had introduced a number of measures in that context. Those priority activities were supported by other equally important national strategies, including improved delivery of social security services. The Government was also seeking to combat HIV/AIDS and to mitigate the social and economic impact of the epidemic on poor households. It believed that human development and improvement of the quality of life of all South Africa's citizens must take population issues into account and that those issues should be integrated into development planning.

25. **Mr. Cuenco** (Philippines) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

26. The Philippines welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the item, for it provided a substantive analysis of the progress made by the United Nations system in eradicating poverty and contained recommendations for eliminating poverty by 2015.

27. As the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation had aptly put it, poverty eradication was the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Indeed, poverty alleviation was central to sustainable development. The familiar consequences of that scourge reached beyond national borders, threatened peace and security and bred terrorism. The little progress made so far reflected a stark reality which could only fuel discontent and lead to violence. The problem of poverty and discontent would have to be solved in many countries if international peace and security were to be maintained.

28. The Secretary-General's report proffered various measures based on best practices and lessons learned to correct the situation, measures which might serve as a road map for the developing countries as they tried to revitalize their poverty alleviation programmes. The efforts of some countries to improve the access of girls to education, build up capacities, foster institutions of civil society, and empower communities were also welcome. However, it was worrying to note from the report that progress had been uneven and that most of the developing countries were unlikely to reach the goals set for 2015.

29. National development was primarily the responsibility of each country, but the developing countries' unilateral pursuits and national efforts must be supported by multilateral cooperation, which would provide financial resources, facilitate technology transfer and capacity-building and establish an enabling international environment conducive to economic growth and development.

30. His Government was doing its best to build an open economy, implementing concrete measures to create a favourable environment for investments not only in the Philippines, but also in the region. It accepted the need for good governance in the public and corporate sectors and would continue its institutional and economic reforms in order to adjust to the realities and imperatives of global cooperation. However, the developing countries needed capital and more foreign direct investment in order to achieve sustainable economic growth and development. Furthermore, access to foreign markets must be improved and the decline in official development assistance reversed, because in many countries such assistance was the primary source of funding for capacity-building programmes. Finally, there must be debt relief for the developing countries, including for middle-income countries, in order to enable them to leverage greater domestic resources for development.

31. In that context, he paid tribute to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences held in 2003, which had addressed those concerns in a comprehensive manner and in partnership with all stakeholders for development. The Monterrey Consensus had been a step forward in the promotion of financing for development, and the Johannesburg Plan

of Implementation would help developing countries put themselves on track towards sustainable development. He also welcomed the Doha Development Agenda and expressed the hope that the multilateral trading system would be fully supportive of the developing countries' development efforts.

32. He supported the proposal on the establishment of a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/137); such a mechanism would contribute to reducing extreme poverty and reaching the other Millennium Development Goals. The main obstacle hindering international cooperation efforts in that regard was the lack of financial support from the rich countries. The results of the Monterrey and Johannesburg meetings had provided the international community with the tools to combat poverty; it must show the political will required to implement them.

33. **Mr. Ayari** (Tunisia) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and said that in spite of progress made by the international community during preceding decades, not all countries had achieved the objectives of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty or the development objectives contained in the Millennium Declaration. In some countries, the number of people condemned to living in abject poverty continued to grow; malnutrition was rife; infectious and transmittable illnesses, such as AIDS and malaria, still exacted a heavy price, in particular in the working population; and there was still a lack of adequate urban housing. There had also been insufficient progress towards universal primary education, elimination of gender-based inequalities, empowerment of women and access to drinking water and health services, all of which were development factors; such problems were compounded by the slowdown in world economic growth, which could increase the numbers of the disadvantaged.

34. All countries must make every effort to eradicate poverty and promote social integration and justice, by mobilizing the necessary domestic resources, encouraging a high national savings rate, creating a favourable climate for foreign investment, adopting effective and coherent macroeconomic policies and encouraging the private sector. Everyone, in particular women and girls, must have access to jobs and education as well as to microcredit and microfinancing.

35. The developing countries were aware that responsibility for that effort was first and foremost theirs, but they could not carry it on without greater official development assistance, elimination of trade barriers, liberalization of trade, opening of developed country markets, stabilization of commodity prices and debt relief.

36. Furthermore, the leaders of the rich countries must keep the promises they made at the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development and at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development to increase assistance, which was essential for the sustainable economic development of the poor countries.

37. The decision to establish a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication was an encouraging initiative in that it reflected the spirit of cooperation which must guide the struggle against that scourge.

38. *Mr. Benmellouk (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

39. **Mr. Djumala** (Indonesia) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; his Government was fully committed to the objectives of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) and the Millennium Development Goals and had adopted measures to incorporate them into national policies and strategies.

40. A large proportion of the world's population was still crippled by extreme poverty, their lives stunted by malnutrition, ill-health and illiteracy. As a result, the self-perpetuating cycle of instability, conflict and endemic disease continued to afflict poverty-stricken regions.

41. Despite the commitments made at the various conferences and summit meetings on the issues of poverty and development, progress had been uneven, and many countries would fail to meet the set targets of halving the number of people living in poverty by 2015, increasing access to drinking water, reducing the number of slum dwellers, lowering child mortality rates and achieving universal primary education, gender equality and access to health care.

42. A network of databases must therefore be created to disseminate information on best practices and lessons learned by certain countries, which could function as useful models for other countries, taking

into account their own economic, cultural and historical situation.

43. While they acknowledged that primary responsibility resided with them, the developing countries, faced with shortfalls in official development assistance, inadequate access to markets and heavy debt burdens, could not by themselves eradicate poverty. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's recommendation concerning the establishment of a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication, while reserving the right to further consider the key elements of such a fund through the Group of 77 and China.

44. **Mr. Joseph** (Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that the extreme poverty, the structurally weak economies and lack of capacities often compounded by geographical handicaps, of the least developed countries hampered their efforts to improve the quality of life of their peoples. Most were lagging behind in achieving the development goals contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Furthermore, official development assistance targets had not been met, and existing assistance was on the decline; a substantial increase in official development assistance was vital in order to eradicate extreme poverty by 2015 and ensure sustainable economic growth.

45. Since the number of least developed countries had greatly increased and most of them were located in Africa, greater synergy must be promoted between the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which shared the objectives of poverty eradication, capacity-building, good governance, resource mobilization and market access.

46. The least developed countries had begun to mobilize for implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, and the Cotonou Declaration had reflected their commitment to the important issues of poverty eradication and sustainable development. International development partners, for their part, had paid special attention to the problems of the least developed countries at the Doha and Monterrey conferences. The Group of Eight had agreed to duty- and quota-free market access for products from the least developed countries, to add $1 billion to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Trust Fund and to increase the use of grants rather than loans for the poorest debt-vulnerable countries. At the Johannesburg World Summit for Sustainable Development some partners had made commitments of new aid to help implement the Millennium Development Goals.

47. **Mr. Fomba** (Mali) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and regretted that in the mad rush towards globalization, countries had forgotten certain fundamental values, including solidarity, an important tool for social development, peace and harmony, and had been content to make empty promises which were rarely translated into concrete actions.

48. Mali had made solidarity a by-word and had adopted various measures in that spirit, the most recent and important of which had been the establishment of the National Solidarity Fund, responsible for financing development and poverty eradication programmes, building the capacities of anti-poverty agencies and providing financial support to savings and microcredit institutions in rural and semi-urban areas. However, given the size of that task, such national solidarity funds must be able to count on the international community's support, which could be provided through a mechanism such as the establishment of a world solidarity fund as recommended by the Secretary-General, a proposal which his delegation fully supported.

49. **Mr. Lamba** (Malawi) said he fully supported the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; he regretted the lack of progress made towards achieving the goals of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and the target set by the Millennium Summit of halving by 2015 the proportion of people living in absolute poverty, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. More than half of the population of Malawi lived below the poverty line without access to social services, a situation which reduced life expectancy. Unabating and widespread poverty complicated efforts to address the HIV/AIDS problem.

50. His Government had implemented a poverty alleviation programme which had improved access to health care, education, safe drinking water and sanitation. Malawi's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

sought to address some of the shortcomings identified in the poverty alleviation programme, through, inter alia, the fostering of rapid, sustainable economic growth targeted to the poor, structural reforms, human capital development and the promotion of good governance. It also addressed cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS, gender, environment and science and technology.

51. His delegation unequivocally supported the Secretary-General's proposal for a world solidarity fund, which would demonstrate the international community's commitment to eradicating poverty; that proposal should be operationalized as soon as possible.

52. He joined other delegations in appealing to development partners to honour their commitment, reiterated at Monterrey, to increase official development assistance and to translate the developing countries' aspirations into reality through debt relief or indeed cancellation, together with increased access to their markets.

53. **Mr. Ahmad** (Iraq) expressed deep concern at the slowdown in the international community's efforts to eradicate poverty, a trend which was exemplified by the drop in the developed countries' commitments in that regard and the reduction from year to year in official development assistance. Furthermore, the United Nations was marginalized when major decisions concerning the world economy were taken, supplanted by the international financial institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO), which were controlled by the developed countries and were taking decisions that had a negative effect on the developing countries. The eradication of poverty required resolution of the main problems hindering development, such as the instability of the international financial system, the clear decrease in financial flows, the widening technological gap between North and South, and the external debt burden, which put an increasing strain on the economies of the developing countries.

54. At a time when many countries were mobilizing to achieve the goals of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), it had become clear that the United Nations, paradoxically, was contributing directly to the spread of poverty, not in the poor countries but in the rich countries, including Iraq, where the unjust embargo imposed more than 12 years before in the name of the United Nations had exacerbated poverty and had had extremely negative economic and social consequences.

55. Before the embargo, in the 1970s and 1980s, Iraq had played a role in financing development in many developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which had received loans on preferential terms, without any economic or political conditions. Iraq had made 42 loans for a total of more than 1.7 billion dollars and had invested in 102 international and regional enterprises for a total of 1.2 billion dollars, with a view to helping those countries strengthen their economic and social infrastructure. He recalled that Iraq, which had the world's second largest oil reserves, had sold oil to many developing countries at affordable prices in order to help them finance their development and eradicate poverty. The unjust embargo declared against Iraq therefore not only deprived the Iraqis of the means to finance their own development but also negatively affected many developing countries and certain least developed countries which had had significant economic relations with Iraq. He recalled that President Saddam Hussein had appealed for the creation of a world fund to help the developing countries, to which the developed countries would contribute, whatever their political or economic system, as would the oil-exporting developing countries. Such a mechanism could help to alleviate the problems which the developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, were facing.

56. Hunger, illiteracy, poverty, disease and interference in the internal affairs of the developing countries were preventing them from undertaking their own development and eradicating poverty. Cooperation in that regard must be fair and based on the sharing of responsibilities, and the assistance provided should not carry with it political conditions. His delegation welcomed the Monterrey Consensus and hoped that States would meet their commitments in the areas of increasing resources devoted to development, eradicating poverty, reforming the international financial system and ensuring the effective participation of the developing countries in the world economy.

57. *Mr. Suazo (Honduras) resumed the Chair.*

58. **Mr. Al-Ayed** (Jordan) said that in May 2002 his Government had adopted a comprehensive strategy to combat poverty. That strategy, which took into account the various aspects of the problem, was aimed at

improving the social protection system by increasing assistance for persons eligible for help from the National Assistance Fund and by improving the databases of national assistance programmes. The strategy included short, medium and long-term initiatives aimed at strengthening the social protection net for the most disadvantaged, improving employment opportunities and guaranteeing access to health-care services. The financial assistance programme, which was part of the National Assistance Fund, was the largest of the programmes created to help the poor and provided between 68 and 75 per cent of the total financial assistance available from the Fund. The traditional assistance programme, also a component of the Fund, currently covered only 50 per cent of individuals living below the poverty line. All stakeholders were aware that in the long-term Jordan could not rely so heavily on the public sector for job creation. In order to remedy that situation, the private sector must be made aware of the role that it could play and ensure that Jordanians who were able to read and write could improve their skills. Unfortunately, many children did not attend school, owing to a lack of school supplies.

59. The deterioration of the situation in the health sector was another inevitable consequence of poverty. Quality health-care services could have a positive effect in many areas, since they could help control population growth rates, protect the rural environment, relieve overcrowding in cities and reduce household and public spending. It was essential that all efforts in Jordan to fight poverty should be supported by the public authorities, which must make it their first priority in their long-term objectives. Although the discussions on poverty eradication and the positive response were a welcome start, the resources currently allocated for that purpose were still inadequate relative to need. It was essential to go beyond the modest and disparate efforts made to date and to develop comprehensive programmes which dealt with all aspects of the problem.

60. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General, as stated in his report (A/57/211), that the obstacles of the heavy debt burden, inadequate access to markets in developed countries and a shortfall in official development assistance could be overcome only through international cooperation. The World Summit for Social Development, the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, the Millennium Summit, the new round of multilateral trade negotiations, the Monterrey Consensus and the New Partnership for Africa's Development testified to the need to strengthen international cooperation in order to overcome the obstacles to poverty eradication. He hoped determined efforts would be made to translate into concrete action the decisions taken at those conferences and to achieve, by 2015, the development goals set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

61. **Mr. Kaemba** (Zambia) expressed concern that poverty levels in sub-Saharan Africa were barely declining while in many parts of the world they were falling steadily. His Government, aware that development was impossible without tackling poverty, had implemented various programmes, and in particular the social reintegration programme referred to in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. Those programmes had had a positive impact on poverty levels in Zambia, but much remained to be done. The authorities had therefore decided to take a more integrated approach and had proceeded to formulate, in cooperation with NGOs, civil society representatives, eminent personalities and international development organizations, a national poverty reduction strategy under the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) 2002-2004. Since no country was able to escape from the vicious circle of poverty solely on the basis of its national resources, his delegation welcomed the establishment by the United Nations of a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication and reiterated its appeal to its international development partners to commit adequate resources to development programmes and the relevant Millennium Development Goals.

62. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) said that attaining the goal of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and the Millennium Declaration to halve by 2015 the proportion of the world's people whose income was less than one dollar a day seemed unlikely, and in such regions as sub-Saharan Africa even impossible. Yet, poverty threatened not only the security and economic development of developing countries, but also international security, since in a globalized world economic crises had global repercussions. In the wake of a war that had ended in 1998 and ravaged its infrastructure and human resource

base, Lebanon had during the last decade put forth enormous efforts in rebuilding that infrastructure and stabilizing the economy, despite an aggravation of the problems by the 22-year long Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Moreover, several instances of Israeli aggression had specifically targeted newly rebuilt infrastructure and sent new waves of displaced persons from southern Lebanon to Beirut. The Lebanese Government had launched a plan for the development of the liberated parts of southern Lebanon. The Government had not received any international assistance for its poverty reduction efforts, although the illegal cultivation of drugs had been eliminated in many rural areas, and in particular in the Bekaa Valley. To finance reconstruction and the improvement of health services and education, the Government had been compelled to accumulate a huge national debt and practise budgetary austerity to curb expenditure. In 1993, the Ministry of Social Affairs had formulated a national poverty reduction strategy with the help of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and the study carried out in 1995 for the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen had shown that 28 per cent of Lebanese households lived below the poverty line. UNDP had then helped the Ministry to draw up a map of poverty in Lebanon. That project had been followed by a national programme for improving living conditions, which had been launched in 1999 and funded by Norway and UNDP. That programme's objectives were to develop a national poverty reduction strategy and build the capacities of the Government in order to implement the strategy, improve social statistics and involve civil society in poverty reduction. To that end, community development projects had been financed in several rural areas. Lebanon was a small country experiencing the same problems as many other developing countries, but could be proud that Mr. Aref Kodeih, an inhabitant of northern Lebanon, had received the 2002 UNDP Poverty Eradication Award.

63. **Ms. van Glaanen Weygel** (Suriname) said that poverty meant not only insufficiency of income and dearth of resources necessary for material well-being but also lack of the most basic human development choices and diminished opportunities to enjoy longevity, health, freedom, a decent life, dignity and respect. Leading a life free of poverty was one of the basic human rights enshrined in such multilateral instruments as the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed inter alia in the texts adopted at the World Summit for Social Development, the Millennium Summit and the Monterrey Conference and under the New Partnership for Africa's Development. In various reports, the Secretary-General had repeated that attaining the Millennium Development Goals, especially those related to poverty eradication, required working at an accelerated pace. To that end, it was necessary to strengthen the efforts put forth at the national level.

64. The Government of Suriname implemented a programme of social assistance, medium-term economic management and long-term development consistent with the country's realities. The programme consisted of two elements: a component aimed at upgrading the social safety net and a component aimed at resource development and employment with a view to long-term gains. That poverty eradication programme was the tangible part of the country's poverty reduction strategy, built into Suriname's 2000-2005 plan. It addressed a variety of areas: trade, the environment, sustainable development, governance, gender mainstreaming, the incidence of HIV/AIDS and partnerships. UNDP supported Suriname's poverty eradication programme, focusing especially on the monitoring of key poverty indicators. The Government of Suriname was determined to continue its poverty reduction efforts and welcomed the support of UNDP in that regard.

65. **Mr. Adhikari** (Nepal) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at the preceding meeting. He expressed concern that poverty continued to increase in the world, to the point that there were currently more poor people than in 1997, the year in which the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) had been launched. The Millennium Declaration had therefore set out specific goals with a view to combating that scourge and accelerating development, but it was unlikely that the Millennium Development Goals would be achieved at the current pace. Indeed, most countries, including Nepal, were lagging behind, owing in large part to weak economic growth. In order to halve the number of persons living in extreme poverty, the developing countries would require an annual growth rate of at least 3.6 per cent, a percentage that few poor countries could hope to attain, especially

since many of them were faced with conflicts and instability. That situation could be explained in part by inadequate and inefficient public spending, their heavy debt load, inadequate access to rich country markets and inadequate official development assistance. The developing countries themselves must, however, also introduce policy reform and promote capacity-building.

66. The least developed countries found themselves in a particularly precarious situation and would have to redouble their efforts to reduce poverty, provide basic services for their populations, particularly with regard to education and health, and vigorously promote development. As they could not on their own meet the Millennium Development Goals, the rich countries must help them by providing official development assistance, debt relief and access to their markets. In order to reduce inequalities between North and South, the industrialized countries must remove their agricultural subsidies and eliminate the tariff and non-tariff barriers which hindered imports from the poor countries.

67. Nepal had committed itself to economic liberalization, decentralization and good governance. It was allocating more resources to infrastructure and basic services, while at the same time encouraging the development of the private sector. The economy had been opened up to foreign direct investment. Poverty eradication had always constituted a priority for national development plans and the measures adopted had led to a reduction of approximately 4 per cent in the number of persons living in extreme poverty over the past 10 years, although 38 per cent of the population still lived below the poverty line. Various programmes to help the poor were currently in place, and more than 70 per cent of the development budget was allocated to rural areas, where most of the poor lived. A microfinancing system had been established in order to encourage the implementation of development projects at the local level and efforts were being made to develop rural infrastructure across the country.

68. His Government had adopted measures to ensure free education until the secondary level and students from disadvantaged groups received study grants. Health clinics were being created throughout the country and the vaccination campaign was continuing. The goal of ensuring access to drinking water for all would probably be achieved, as envisaged in the goals of the Millennium Declaration.

69. Although the various reforms undertaken were beginning to bear fruit, the Maoist insurrection had paralysed the nation, even erasing some of the progress made. The Maoists, who wished to abolish the constitutional monarchy and replace it with a totalitarian regime, terrorized rural areas and destroyed schools, bridges, roads and housing. In order to combat the rebels and accelerate development, Nepal needed the support of the international community, particularly to equip its security forces and develop the regions where the Maoists were active.

70. He welcomed the commitment by the European Union and the United States of America to increase official development assistance. South-South Cooperation must also be strengthened at the bilateral, subregional and regional levels. The proposal to establish a world solidarity fund for the eradication of poverty was a worthwhile initiative; all countries, in particular the richest countries, should contribute generously to that fund, which should be used to help countries meet the Millennium Development Goals.

71. **Mr. Yahya** (Israel) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/57/211). He supported the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) because it was an African initiative. His Government was ready to offer assistance to that initiative in areas such as training, dispatch of experts, organization of courses and cooperation with relevant States.

72. The phenomenon of extreme poverty in the third world and elsewhere could no longer be ignored by the industrialized countries. Poverty was a multi-dimensional socio-economic phenomenon which constituted a flagrant violation of basic human rights. The continued existence of poverty was harmful not only to the individuals and families in need, but also to their communities, their societies and the world at large. Poverty facilitated the exploitation of cheap labour, hindering the adoption of modern technology; it caused population movements, which led to demographic and cultural changes; the latter could trigger the development of local terrorist movements, which exploited inequality and the despair of needy populations, making them converts to their cause.

73. The developing countries must develop a strategy which would identify clear goals to help eradicate poverty. The war against that scourge required long-

term investments in many areas. Accordingly, countries must give poverty eradication their highest priority and remain steadfast in pursuing that goal. The tensions and deprivation which went hand in hand with extreme poverty caused families to disintegrate.

74. One way of reducing poverty was to strengthen civil society, by empowering citizens and developing social and community-based organizations. Every effort should be made to develop new partnerships and networks of voluntary organizations, map out community resources, promote socio-economic development by balancing effectiveness, economic growth and social justice, develop services and programmes for actual needs and problems, and promote data flows that would improve access to resources.

75. Referring to the statement by the representative of Lebanon, he said that Israeli forces had left Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978). His delegation hoped that the foreign forces currently in Lebanon would leave its territory and that the country would be able to focus its efforts on the fight against poverty. It also hoped that in the future the two countries could become good neighbours.

76. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had thus concluded its general debate on agenda item 89.

Agenda item 92: Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields (A/57/75-E/2002/57, A/57/343, A/57/444)

Introduction and general debate

77. **Mr. Khan** (Director of the Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/75-E/2002/57), said that it had been prepared in response to requests from the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in 2001. The previous year the issue of how best to address the reviews of the major United Nations conferences had been raised. Since then, a number of meetings had been held, for example in Monterrey and Johannesburg. The report went beyond that issue and dealt with the links between the Millennium Declaration and the conferences held during 2002. The main task in the years to come would be to ensure the implementation of the outcomes of the major conferences in a coherent, balanced and comprehensive fashion. The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the functional commissions and the agencies, programmes and funds of the United Nations must coordinate their activities, reorient their discussions from the review of follow-up measures to implementation and focus their efforts on outcomes rather than policies. In most cases, the policies had already been agreed upon, as evidenced by the commitments made in Monterrey and Johannesburg, as well as in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

78. Care must also be taken to ensure that the major stakeholders, namely the multilateral financial institutions, the United Nations system, the private sector, civil society and public opinion in general, continued to participate fully in the follow-up process to major conferences. The same level of energy as had been shown in Monterrey and Johannesburg, in particular, must be maintained in the implementation of the follow-up processes. The role of the General Assembly should be to establish an overall policy direction for both Governments and the United Nations system, and that of the Economic and Social Council should be to ensure coordination of the activities of United Nations bodies and to ensure that the functional commissions coordinated their efforts with a view to the coherent implementation of the outcomes of the major conferences. Those bodies should adopt an integrated approach to the major conferences while avoiding duplication of activities; they should also remain active at the expert level. The Secretariat, for its part, was determined to provide the Committee with any support it required to reorient its work in that direction.

79. **Mr. Vallenilla** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he wished to reaffirm the commitments and challenges relating to development contained in the documents emanating from the major United Nations conferences and summits. He recalled the need to strengthen the role of the General Assembly as the intergovernmental mechanism best suited to formulating policies in the economic and social fields, including coordinated and integrated follow-up to the major conferences and summits. The Economic and Social Council must, for its part, continue to promote coordinated follow-up to the declarations adopted at the conferences and

summits, because they contributed to an integrated framework for the implementation of the development objectives defined at the international level. Each conference or summit had an individual theme and its own follow-up processes; similar components should be identified in order to link the commitments of the various conferences with a view to facilitating a review of the implementation of those commitments, in particular at the financial and technical levels. Integrated implementation could be undertaken for intersectoral issues at the intergovernmental level. Moreover, at the institutional level, it was essential to ensure a more rational allocation of resources, while respecting the principles of impartiality, neutrality and non-selectivity.

80. In order to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for attaining the internationally fixed development goals it was necessary to enhance the coherence, integration and coordination of the work of the plenary General Assembly and the Second and Third Committees. The Assembly also needed to ensure greater coherence among the various specialized agencies of the system and between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, with a view to implementing at all levels the texts adopted at the big United Nations conferences and summits and making progress towards the goals of sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and lasting development. The Group of 77 and China therefore proposed the establishment of an open-ended ad hoc working group, under the auspices of the President of the General Assembly, which should begin its work as soon as possible.

81. **Ms. Løj** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries of Eastern and Central Europe, said that bringing coherence to the follow-up processes of the major United Nations conferences under a common framework was one of the most important challenges to the United Nations system. For the European Union the Millennium Declaration constituted the overarching policy framework for the economic and social work of the United Nations. It was a starting point for the integrated follow-up of all the major United Nations conferences and a means of building on the many linkages between them. The Millennium Development Goals were concrete and measurable. A coordinated approach must focus on their attainment as an organizing principle of the work of the General Assembly in the field of development. The United Nations must take the lead in carrying out the agenda set out in the Declaration.

82. It was important to make better use of the mechanisms of the United Nations system in the area of development. In utilizing the existing structures and institutions an effort must be made to avoid any duplication of work and to focus on actual implementation in the field. In that context the European Union was ready to support the establishment of an open-ended ad hoc working group with a concrete and time-bound mandate to examine, within the framework of the Millennium Declaration, the ways in which the work of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the functional commissions might contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

83. Strengthening the United Nations would also strengthen the international system. The conference follow-up procedures must be used in a spirit of partnership including the stakeholders as well, especially the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. It was also important to involve civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders as much as possible. Implementation in the field constituted an enormous challenge and attainment of the 2015 goals entailed drawing on the resources of all development partners from the private and public sectors at all levels. New modalities must be used in order to foster stakeholder participation. The success of the follow-up of the conferences would depend on real achievements at the country level. The primary responsibility for sustained development and poverty eradication rested with each country. It was therefore necessary to ensure policy coherence and to support countries' implementation efforts on the basis of nationally owned development frameworks.

84. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to the statement made by the delegation of Israel, said that Israeli aggression against his country was continuing, seriously impeding its development efforts and fight against poverty. Israel's repeated attacks in the 1990s and the military campaigns designed to destroy Lebanon's infrastructure, which had been rebuilt at great cost, constituted an attempt to block Lebanon's development. The Israeli authorities were threatening Lebanon by military means in order to prevent it from

using its water resources and they were trying to undermine the Government's efforts to protect the people of southern Lebanon. The Israeli delegation had mentioned the Syrian presence in Lebanon: that presence had been established in accordance with agreements between Syria and Lebanon and concerned only them.

85. **Mr. Yahya** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Israel wished Lebanon prosperity; he pointed out that the Israeli troops had left Lebanon.

86. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, drew attention to the question of the mines laid by the Israeli forces of occupation, which were obstructing Lebanon's development, in particular the cultivation of arable land.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.